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Page: 1

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CONFIDENTIAL PTQ8982

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 09557 01 OF 03 232327Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CA-01
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P 232321Z OCT 01  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4517  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DOD WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 09557 01 OF 03 232327Z  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 009557

STATE FOR WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2011  
TAGS: PHUM, PREL, PTER, PGOV, ASEC, ECON, CO  
SUBJECT: NOTES FROM THE FIELD: PARAMILITARIES CHALLENGE  
GUERRILLAS IN ARAUCA

REF: A) BOGOTA 9203, B) BOGOTA 9243, C) BOGOTA 8940, D)  
BOGOTA 9074, AND E) FBIS LAP20011015000027

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 1

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
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Page: 2

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON FOR REASONS:  
1.5 (B) AND (D)

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SUMMARY:  
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1. (C) POLOFFS VISITED ARAUCA, THE CAPITAL OF THE OIL-RICH DEPARTMENT OF THE SAME NAME THAT BORDERS VENEZUELA, ON OCTOBER 16-17 TO CONFIRM PRESS REPORTS THAT THE UNITED SELF-DEFENSE GROUP OF COLOMBIA (AUC) WAS MOVING INTO THE DEPARTMENT, DETERMINE THE AUC'S MOTIVES, AND GAUGE THE SECURITY SITUATION (REFTEL A). [NOTE: SEPTTEL WILL FOCUS ON THE BROADER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN ARAUCA. END NOTE.] POLOFFS MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM SECURITY, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CIVIL SOCIETY SECTORS

END SUMMARY.

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ENTRENCHED GUERRILLA PRESENCE  
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3. (U) IN THE EARLY 1980S, WHAT IS NOW ARAUCA DEPARTMENT WAS PART OF COLOMBIA'S "WILD EAST." THERE WAS NO ARMY OR POLICE PRESENCE UNTIL ARAUCA BECAME A DEPARTMENT IN 1991. IN 1983, OIL WAS FOUND AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY'S (ELN) "DOMINGO LAIN" FRONT BEGAN TO LAY CLAIM TO THE PROFITS FROM THE BURGEONING

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 2

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PETROLEUM INDUSTRY. A GERMAN COMPANY, MANISMANN, PAID THE ELN USD \$80,000, WHICH ENSURED ELN PERMISSION TO BUILD THE PIPELINE THAT STRETCHES FROM CANO LIMON (ARAUCA DEPARTMENT) TO COVENAS (SUCRE DEPARTMENT, ON THE  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 09557 01 OF 03 232327Z  
ATLANTIC COAST). OVER THE YEARS, THE ELN HONED ITS EXTORTION SKILLS ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OIL BUSINESS CONTRACTORS, GENERATING ASTOUNDING PROFITS DURING THE 1990S. OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM ESTIMATED THAT THE GUERRILLAS RECEIVED APPROXIMATELY USD \$16.8 MILLION PER YEAR, OR 10 PERCENT OF LOCAL AND DEPARTMENTAL ROYALTIES WHEN AT FULL PRODUCTION.

4. (U) THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC), HEADED BY GERMAN BRICENO SUAREZ "GRANNOBLES" -- THE BROTHER OF "MONO JOJOY" -- MOVED INTO ARAUCA IN 1997 TO CHALLENGE THE ELN FOR PROFITS FROM OIL PRODUCTION; UP TO 120,000 BARRELS OF OIL A DAY VALUED AT USD \$2.5 MILLION. THE FARC'S 10TH AND 45TH FRONTS OPENLY FOUGHT WITH THE ELN AND BEGAN TO REPLACE ITS INFRASTRUCTURE OF EXTORTION THROUGHOUT THE DEPARTMENT. THE FARC HAS INCREASINGLY TAKEN THE LEAD IN ATTACKS AGAINST THE CANO LIMON-COVENAS PIPELINE, WHICH HAS BEEN HIT 135 TIMES THIS YEAR BY EITHER GUERRILLA FORCE (REFTEL B).

5. (C) OVER THE YEARS, THE FARC AND THE ELN HAVE ESTABLISHED URBAN MILITIAS TO ENFORCE THEIR SYSTEM OF EXTORTION. THE GUERRILLAS HAVE AN INFORMAL NETWORK OF INFORMANTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ8983

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 09557 02 OF 03 232327Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CA-01
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	FBIE-00	FBO-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	MED-07
	M-00	AC-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 2001BOGOTA09557

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 4

Channel: n/a

SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
USSS-00	ASDS-01	R-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02
G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/025W			

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P 232321Z OCT 01  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4518  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
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PAGE 02                   BOGOTA 09557 02 OF 03 232327Z  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BOGOTA 009557

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AUC SEEKS TO CLEANSE ARAUCA  
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6. (C) IN A MAY 21 NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW, AUC POLITICAL  
LEADER CARLOS CASTANO VOWED THAT THE AUC WOULD SEND 300  
MEN INTO ARAUCA TO WREST CONTROL OF THE REGION FROM THE  
ELN AND FARC.



B1

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 4

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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current, Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 2001BOGOTA09557

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Page: 5  
Channel: n/a

7. (U) THE FIRST INCURSION INTO ARAUCA REPORTEDLY OCCURRED ON SEPTEMBER 6, WHEN 200 MEN WEARING AUC ARMBANDS THREATENED TO KILL RESIDENTS OF TAME (SOUTHWEST OF THE CAPITAL IN ARAUCA DEPARTMENT) IF THEY HAD LINKS

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03            BOGOTA 09557 02 OF 03 232327Z  
TO THE GUERRILLAS OR COLLABORATED WITH THEM TO ATTACK THE PIPELINE. ON 18 SEPTEMBER, THE AUC SPRAYED GRAFFITI ON WALLS IN URBAN TAME. ON SEPTEMBER 24, FARC AND PARAMILITARY MEMBERS CLASHED IN RINCON HONDA, A RURAL ZONE OF TAME, RESULTING IN FIVE DEATHS.

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04            BOGOTA 09557 02 OF 03 232327Z

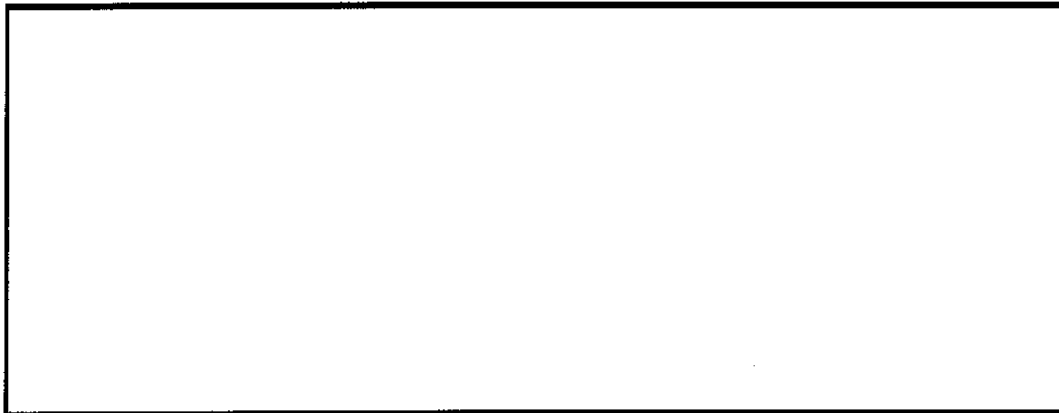
10. (U) THE AUC ALSO BEGAN TO SELECTIVELY ASSASSINATE ALLEGED MEMBERS OR SUPPORTERS OF BOTH GUERRILLA GROUPS. ON OCTOBER 2, THE AUC KILLED CONGRESSMAN OCTAVIO SARMIENTO BOHORQUEZ, WHOM IT CLAIMED WAS A FARC SUPPORTER (REFTEL C). LESS THAN A WEEK LATER, THE AUC MURDERED LUIS ALFREDO COLMENARES CHIA, AN ALLEGED ELN SYMPATHIZER, IN BROAD DAYLIGHT IN NORTHERN BOGOTA

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 5

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(REFTEL D). IN A STATEMENT PUBLISHED ON ITS INTERNET SITE ON OCTOBER 13, THE AUC POLITICAL AND MILITARY DIRECTORATE TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH MURDERS AS PART OF ITS STRATEGIC CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE THE GUERRILLA INFRASTRUCTURE IN ARAUCA (REFTEL E).



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CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ8984

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 09557 03 OF 03 232327Z  
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	FBIE-00	FBO-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
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	ASDS-01	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/018W				

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AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 6

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 2001BOGOTA09557

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 7  
Channel: n/a

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02                    BOGOTA 09557 03 OF 03 232327Z  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BOGOTA 009557

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FARC RESPOND WITH "PARO ARMADO"  
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12. (U) ON SEPTEMBER 28, THE FARC RESPONDED WITH A "PARO ARMADO" OR ARMED STRIKE, WHICH PARALYZED THE ECONOMY FOR 19 DAYS. THE LEADER OF THE FARC FRONT THREATENED TO KILL ANYONE WHO MOVED THROUGH THE STREETS. LEADERS OF THE TRANSPORT SECTOR TOLD VISITING POLOFFS THAT ON OCTOBER 8, ARMED MEN KILLED A TAXI DRIVER OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING THE STRIKE. TRANSPORT SECTOR LEADERS THEN ASKED THE GUERRILLAS TO SPARE TAXI DRIVERS FROM THE STRIKE, BUT THEIR REQUEST WAS REFUSED.

13. (U) ON OCTOBER 16, FELIPE RINCON, A COMMANDER OF THE FARC'S 10TH FRONT, ANNOUNCED OVER THE RADIO THE END OF THE STRIKE AND SAID THE PEOPLE OF ARAUCA HAD RESPONDED POSITIVELY. THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ESTIMATED THAT THE DEPARTMENT LOST OVER USD \$20 MILLION DURING THE 19-DAY STRIKE, WHICH RESULTED IN SHORTAGES OF BASIC GOODS. CNP CHIEF RODRIGUEZ SAID THE FARC ENDED THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03                    BOGOTA 09557 03 OF 03 232327Z  
ARMED STRIKE BECAUSE IT WAS ADVERSELY AFFECTING FARC  
SUPPLY LINES.



Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 7

B1

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 2001BOGOTA09557

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 8

Channel: n/a

B1

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CONFIDENTIAL

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 8

UNCLASSIFIED